From: Deborah Epstein
To: Simmons, Denise
Subject: Re: Mass Against HP
Date: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 11:57:16 AM

Dear Ms. Simmons,

Thanks so much for your clear and helpful response. I will continue to watch this issue, as it is one of those core Cambridge issues—how to be fair and to hear the views of the full constituency in a measured and even-handed way, to seek consensus to the best of our ability, and not just run with the most current political fad.

I have fond memories of holding your niece (?) at a meeting in our architecture offices at 25 Mt Auburn St. when we were working with the City Council to change the zoning for Banks St. This must have been 10 or 15 years ago. She must be so big now!

Many thanks,

Deborah Epstein

On Apr 24, 2018, at 11:33 AM, Simmons, Denise <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

Dear Ms. Epstein,

Thank you for your email. So far, I have not yet seen an actual draft of the proposed resolution asking the City to cease purchasing HP equipment and supplies. I understand there's been a great deal of concern in the community about this matter – yet I must underscore that **this will only appear on the City Council's agenda if one or more City Councilors sponsor it.** We will not know if it is on the agenda until either a City Councilor publicly declares that they'll be sponsoring this (to my knowledge, this has not happened), or until the agenda is finalized by the Clerk's Office and posted online on the Thursday evening around 5:30 pm prior to the Monday City Council meeting (indeed, I had originally heard that the organization looking to have this sponsored was hoping to get this placed on the agenda for April 23. It was NOT on last night's agenda, but the organization may be recalculating as to when they think this *can* be introduced). I can, at the very least, confirm that *I* am not a sponsor of such a resolution.

There have been numerous passionate op-eds, emails, and social media posts condemning the City Council for drafting this resolution, for rushing this to a vote without adequate opportunities for the public to weigh in, nor even giving people a chance to read the resolution. Some people have condemned the City Council for seemingly being on the brink of passing this resolution, or for seemingly being on the brink of rejecting it. None of these scenarios are accurate. While I understand the passion behind this matter, I must clarify that we do not yet actually have a resolution or policy order in front of us, there has been absolutely no debate about this amongst the City Councilors, and the City Council will not have an opportunity to take this up for consideration*unless and until* a resolution is sponsored by at least one of us and introduced at a public meeting. At this point, I am not yet certain if such a resolution will be introduced or not.

I appreciate your reaching out and sharing your views on this. I am currently reading up on this issue to be better informed, I am reviewing all the emails and letters coming in about this issue, and I am reaching out to our representatives in Congress to seek their input on an issue that is more international than municipal in scope. Should this matter end up before the City Council – either on April 30 or at a later date – I will look forward to engaging in a thoughtful discussion and debate with my colleagues on the Council and then seeing how to best resolve this matter in a way that allows everyone to feel they have had a fair chance to be heard. Thank you.

E. Denise Simmons

From: Deborah Epstein <deborahepstein321@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 10:22 AM
To: City Council

Subject: Mass Against HP

Dear City Council,

Many thanks for serving our city! As a Cambridge resident for the last 39 years, and as. Business owner in Cambridge for the last 30 years, I feel that my family and I have a great deal of our lives invested here.

I am disturbed by the discussion to break off contracts with HP. I understand and agree that Palestinians need to be heard, seen, included, that the Israelis, and especially their current administration, are not blameless for many problematic issues. However, **I disagree with an Israeli boycott, or a boycott of companies that do business with Israel.**

Just as the US's present administration does not represent me, I fully believe that the Israeli current administration does not represent the people of Israel, as it does not represent me as a Jew.

I do not agree with those who believe that starving Israel will solve any problems at all. As a matter of fact, yesterday I received a letter from my college, Barnard College, who is struggling with this same issue of a call from students and outside groups to boycott Israel. I commend the answer of the President of the College. Here is an excerpt:

"For any referendum related to Barnard's endowment to be considered by the Board of Trustees, it should meet two exacting standards. The issue under discussion must relate directly to Barnard's mission, and there must be a clear consensus across the Barnard community that the recommended approach is the best means to address the issue at hand.

The referendum you are currently considering does not meet these two standards. First, taking an institutional stand amid the complexities of the Mideast conflict would risk chilling campus discourse on a set of issues that members of our community should be able to discuss and debate freely. Choosing a side therefore would be inconsistent with our mission. Second, there is clearly not consensus across the Barnard community on whether or how to address the issue. ... For these reasons, Barnard will not take action in response to this referendum.

It is imperative that all of us at Barnard work hard to foster a community in which difficult topics can be discussed in an environment free from fear and hate."

I do understand the difference between a college and a city, but I believe that both of the criteria stated here apply to Cambridge, and I come down on the same side of recommending against taking action against Israel when the list of human rights violators coddled by the City of Cambridge is long and indefensible. **Taking such a limited action, and only against Israel, to me feels anti-Semitic, in a time when many Jews are working tirelessly to fight the Muslim ban, work for peace in the Middle East, and otherwise improve the world for all of us.**

Many thanks,

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